



LIBERALS CUT HYDRO-ELECTRIC RATES

With an election less than 18 months away, Premier Kathleen Wynne unveiled her long-anticipated [plan to lower hydro-electric rates](#) and restore her political fortunes. Wynne's plan will see hydro-electric rates drop by 25 per cent for all residential customers. While most political "Hail Mary" actions are unsuccessful, the Liberals are hoping that their plan will reverse their political standing. Unfortunately for the Liberals, any credit they get for taking action on behalf of Ontarians may be drowned out by negative reactions about how they got there in the first place and why it took them so long to reverse their policy. The opposition parties are already condemning the Liberals for such inaction and proclaiming the reversal as politically motivated. But, for the Liberals, the key will be if this issue moves out of the political spotlight. If it does, it will surely help their electoral prospects. If it doesn't, the likelihood of a fifth governing mandate becomes even more remote.

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

[BILL 97, MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT, 2017](#)

PC MPP Julia Munro (York—Simcoe) introduced a bill to proclaim June 15 as Magna Carta Day. Her bill would recognize the day that King John affixed his seal to the Magna Carta, which placed limits on the monarch's power to overrule the law and protected the rights of ordinary people.

[BILL 98, CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS AMENDMENT ACT \(NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS\), 2017](#)

NDPMPP Catherine Fife (Kitchener—Waterloo) introduced a bill to amend the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, so that corporations are not eligible to receive funding for child care and early years programs and services

unless they are not-for-profit corporations. Although Fife's bill passed 1st Reading, it was quickly defeated at 2nd Reading with the Liberals and PCs combining to scuttle the bill by a vote of 35–12.

[BILL 99, CHOICE FOR PATIENTS SEEKING ADDICTION TREATMENT ACT, 2017](#)

PC MPP Sylvia Jones' (Dufferin—Caledon) bill would amend the *Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act* to require persons who operate a centre or program that provides residential substance abuse treatment services to provide certain information to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and require the Minister to publish that information.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 92, SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

Although Education Minister Mitzie Hunter's (Scarborough—Guildwood) bill has not passed 2nd Reading yet, the Liberals introduced a time allocation motion to end debate on the bill. The bill will now be voted on at 2nd Reading on Monday, March 6, and then will be referred to committee for hearings. Once hearings and clause-by-clause consideration are completed, the bill is expected to pass prior to the end of March. Among the bill's amendments would be a provision to allow current collective agreements to be extended beyond their current expiry date. The previous legislation did not allow for collective agreements to be extended.

BILL 97, MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT, 2017

PC MPP Julia Munro's (York—Simcoe) bill also passed 2nd Reading this week and was referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

BILLS PASSED

BILL 27, BURDEN REDUCTION ACT

Economic Development Minister Brad Duguid's (Scarborough Centre) red tape reduction legislation, Bill 27, *Burden Reduction Act*, passed 3rd Reading with the support of the PCs by a vote of 76–14. The NDP opposed the legislation.

MOTIONS DEBATED

Liberal MPP Grant Crack put forward a [motion calling for the song "Notre Place"](#) to be declared the official anthem of Francophones in Ontario. The motion passed by a voice vote.